

# The ACRE

*the story of a neighborhood  
and its people*

St. Patrick's Ho



# New Dublin

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"In the suburbs of Lowell, within a few rods of the canals, is a settlement, called by some, New Dublin, which occupies rather more than an acre of ground. It contains a population of not far from 500 Irish, who dwell in about 100 cabins from 7 to 10 feet in height, built of slabs and rough boards; a fire-place made of stone, in one end, topped out with two or three flour barrels or lime casks. In a central situation is a school house, built in the same style as the dwelling-houses, turfed up to the eaves with a window in one end, and small holes in two sides for the admission of air and light. In this room are collected together perhaps 150 children."

*Portsmouth N.H. Journal, 1831*

*The Irish Came to Lowell, Panas & Quinn*



1790s – 1810s\_\_\_\_\_



Small group of Irish living in Chelmsford work in glass factory.  
The Pawtucket Canal transports goods around falls. Soon replaced by Middlesex Canal.



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Collection of the Lowell Historical Society

## Merrimack Manufacturing opens.

**Kirk Boott needs power from river brought to new mill sites.**



# 1821

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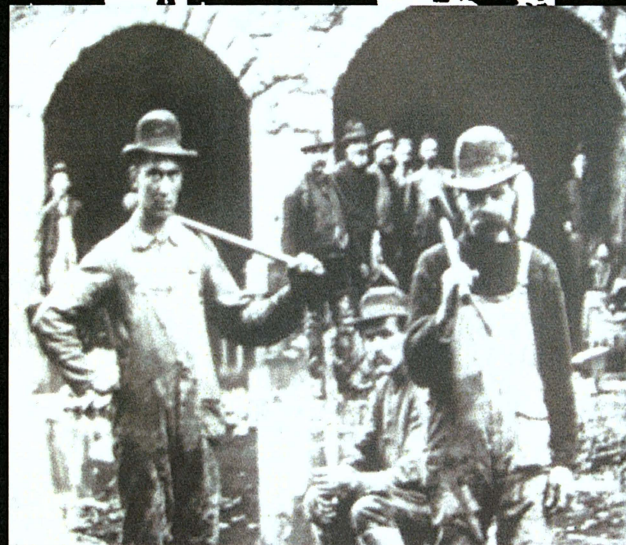


**Hugh Cummiskey and 30 Irish laborers arrive from Charlestown and contract to widen and deepen the canals.**



# The WORKERS

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Irish workers take on the laborious and dangerous job of canal work. Deaths by crushing or drowning are common.



# Settlement \_\_\_\_\_



*The Irish Came to Lowell, Panas & Quinn*

When the canals were being dug a large number of citizens of the Green Isle were brought here for that work. On what was called "The Acre", there stood an Irish village, with the real Irish cabins and shanties, built of boards, sods and mud—such as can be seen in Ballyshannon, if any of the Lowell people ever happen to go there. Outside were the chimneys, built in a half circle, of paving stone, topped out with flour-barrels, for the smoke and ventilation.

*Recollection of George Hedrick, 1865.*



# Settlement

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*The Irish Came to Lowell, Panas & Quinn*

*Some of the first [Irish] settlers shared their shanties with their swine; but ere long a great collection of piggeries was formed behind the shanties, and a peremptory standing order was issued "Pigs to the rear." That order was generally obeyed, but not all at once. There was a pig-headed, contrary-minded minority that resented and resisted this "Saxon innovation," and that resolved, in hog Latin, stare semper super antiquas vias, to stand forever in the ancient ways. Dennis Crowley was the first Kelt in Lowell who applied whitewash to his shanty; Timothy Ford was the first who built for himself a frame house and painted it; Nicholas Fitzpatrick was the second; and the practice soon became common.*

Reminiscence of Charles Crowley, 1881.



# Settlement

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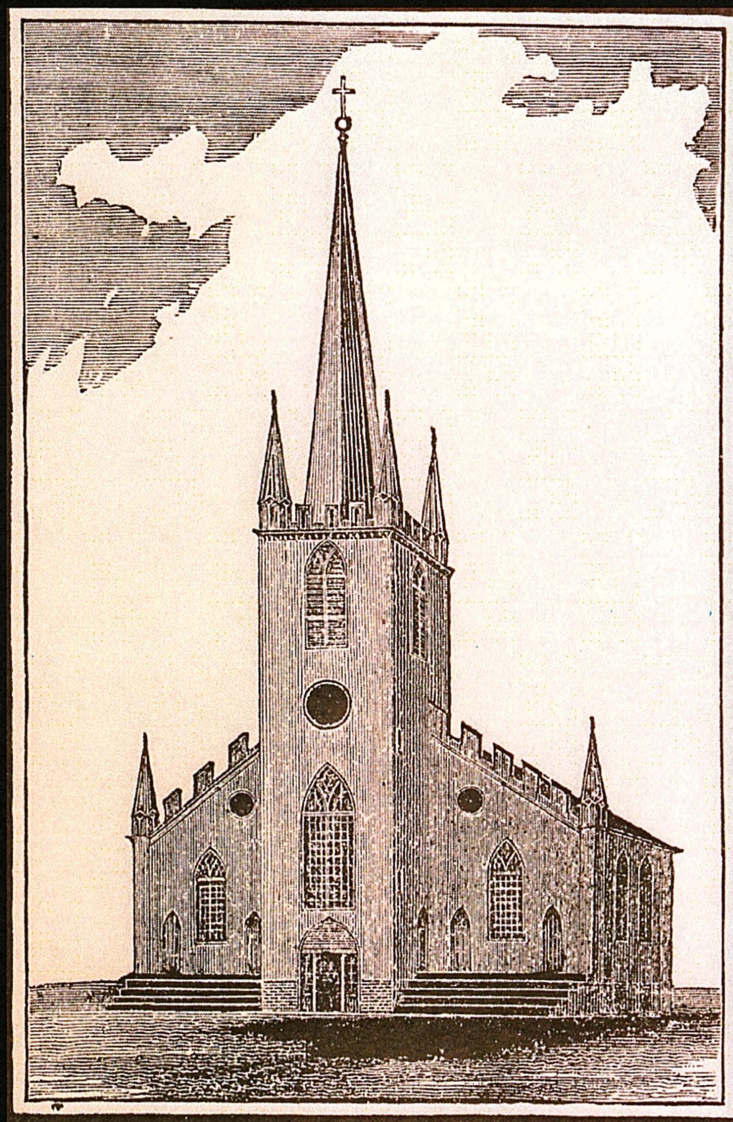
Irish Catholic Genesis of Lowell

Boott had been sorely perplexed at the reports of week-end spats and fights among his Irish employees who lived on the "Acre." One evening at supper, according to tradition, Boott asked his Irish housekeeper: "What is the matter with those Irish countrymen of yours up in the Camps, Mrs. Winters? Why are they always quarreling and raising disturbances?" And his housekeeper is said to have replied: "Well, Mr. Boott, those countrymen of mine will continue to fight and drink and be bothersome until they have a priest to steady them. What they want more than anything else is a priest and a church!" Some few weeks later, probably as the result of this conversation,

Irish Catholic Genesis of Lowell, O'Dwyer



# St. Patrick's \_\_\_\_\_



1831



# Conflict \_\_\_\_\_

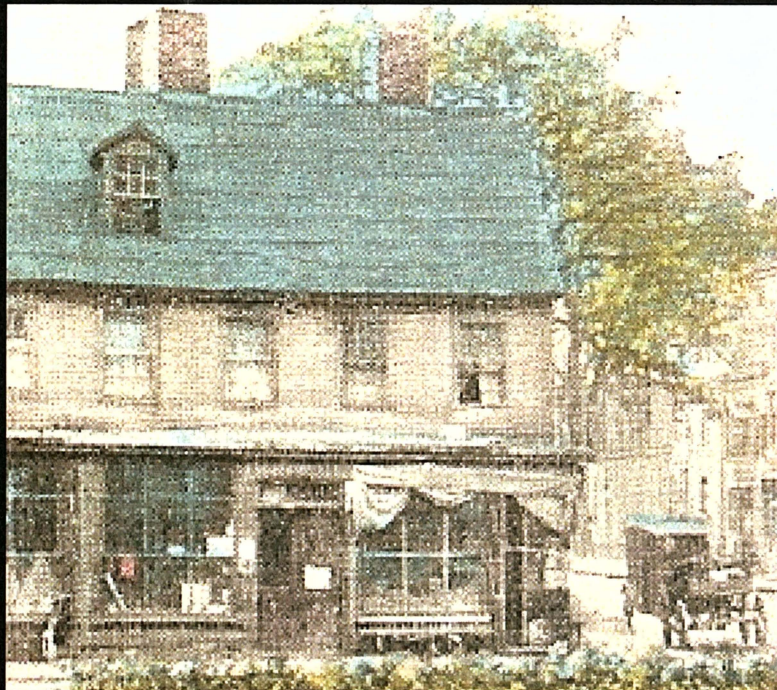
**THE MERCURY.**  
LOWELL, MAY 28, 1831.


**THE YANKEE AND PADDY QUARREL.**—The distant newspapers contain wonderful accounts of the late "riot" in this town. Nearly all the reports that come in from a distance, agree that one, or more of those engaged were killed.—None, however, lost their life; and but few were slightly wounded. The quarrel originated in a very trifling circumstance: and would

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# Life in the Acre



<p><b>Bakers</b></p> <p>P. H. DALEY PROVISION DEALER 179 Broadway</p>	<p><b>West Indies, Dry Good</b></p> <p>JOHN P. CURLEY Pork, Mutton, Lamb, Poultry, Vegetables, Canned Goods, Etc.</p>	<p><b>Shoemaker</b></p> <p>Loneragan's "Beaute" \$2.00 Shoe for Ladies</p>
<p><b>Housekeepers</b></p> <p>Golden Corn Cakes E. J. ... MANUFACTURER</p>	<p><b>Harness Maker</b></p> <p>COE, SALEM AND ADAMS STREETS</p>	
<p><b>Clergy</b></p> <p>LOWELL CADET BAND JOHN J. GIBBS, Leader 115 Cross Street</p>	<p><b>Builder</b></p> <p>K. L. MARRIN CO. DRY AND FANCY GOODS 100 Broadway, St. Lowell</p>	
<p><b>Gardener</b></p> <p>WILLIAM LONERAGAN 2 Rockdale Ave.</p>	<p><b>Coal Dealer</b></p> <p>CHARLES A. CARON ... Baker ... 100 BROADWAY LOWELL, MASS.</p>	<p>Buy your next Pair of Shoes of JOHN J. LONERAGAN 225 DUTTON STREET, LOWELL</p>
<p><b>Teacher</b></p> <p>H. H. Wilder &amp; Co. 29-31 MARKET ST</p>	<p><b>Widow</b></p> <p>JOSEPH HARVEY Plumber, Steam and Gas Fitter 100 North Street, Lowell</p>	<p><b>Grocer</b></p> <p>A. S. McNABB Dealers in</p>
<p><b>Stonecutter</b></p> <p>LOWELL, MASS. Plumbing, Heating and Sheet</p>	<p><b>Soldier</b></p> <p>GEO. A. LINDSAY General Jobbing and Contracting Store and Office Work Dry Air Refrigerators Shop at 100 Market Street, Lowell</p>	<p><b>Trader</b></p> <p>FANCY GOODS and NOTIONS 220 BROADWAY</p>
<p><b>Blacksmith</b></p> <p>DALY'S WHITE PINE COUGH SYRUP A Sure and Speedy Cure for Coughs, Croup, Whooping Cough, and Diseases of Throat and Lungs Prepared by C. A. DALY</p>	<p><b>Operative</b></p> <p>Book Dealer</p>	<p><b>Machinist</b></p> <p>FRANK J. MCCARTHY ... GROCER ... NO. 758 ADAMS STREET</p>



# The Irish Schools

Attendance has been 208. Showing a punctuality, and regularity of attendance fully equal to the other schools.

The Committee think it is a great success of this arrangement must have been every observed, in the improved conduct of the pupils, in their freedom from misdeeds, and quarrelsome boys. And it is hoped they will soon be equally improved in their condition and respectability, and in their redemption from Irish and moral degradation.

In concluding the report, the Committee would express their hope that the very liberal appropriation of support of the schools the past year, would enable them to carry this plan into effect, without exceeding the limits of said appropriation. And they would earnestly commend these schools to the continual patronage of their fellow citizens. Nor can they refrain from expressing their obligations, in the prosecution of this object, to the benevolent and persevering efforts of the Rev. Mr. Connelley; to whose zealous and efficient operation their success may be mainly attributed.

J. Collins  
J. Siken  
A. Case

J. M. Graves  
A. D. Ellington

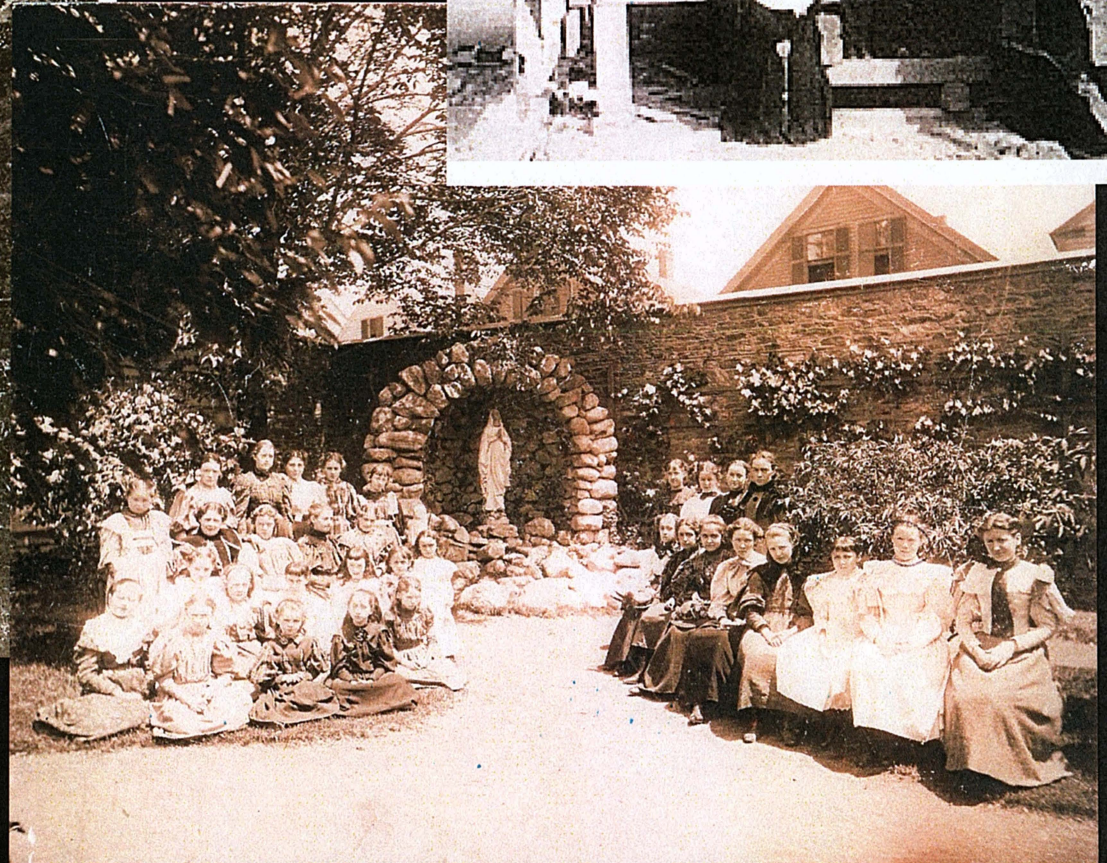
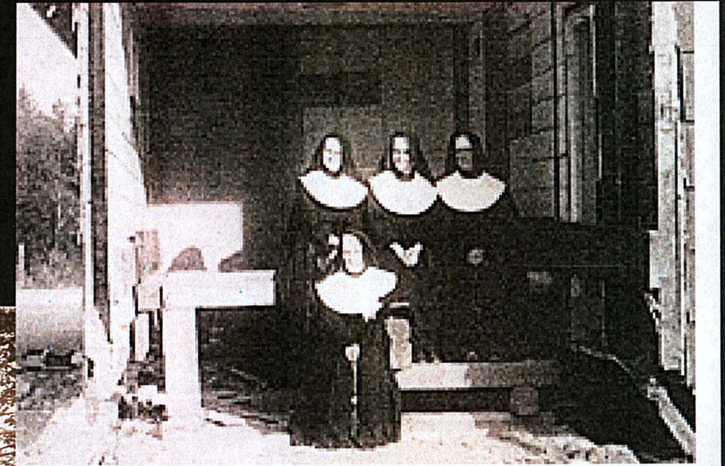
A. Clark  
J. B. Thayer





# Education

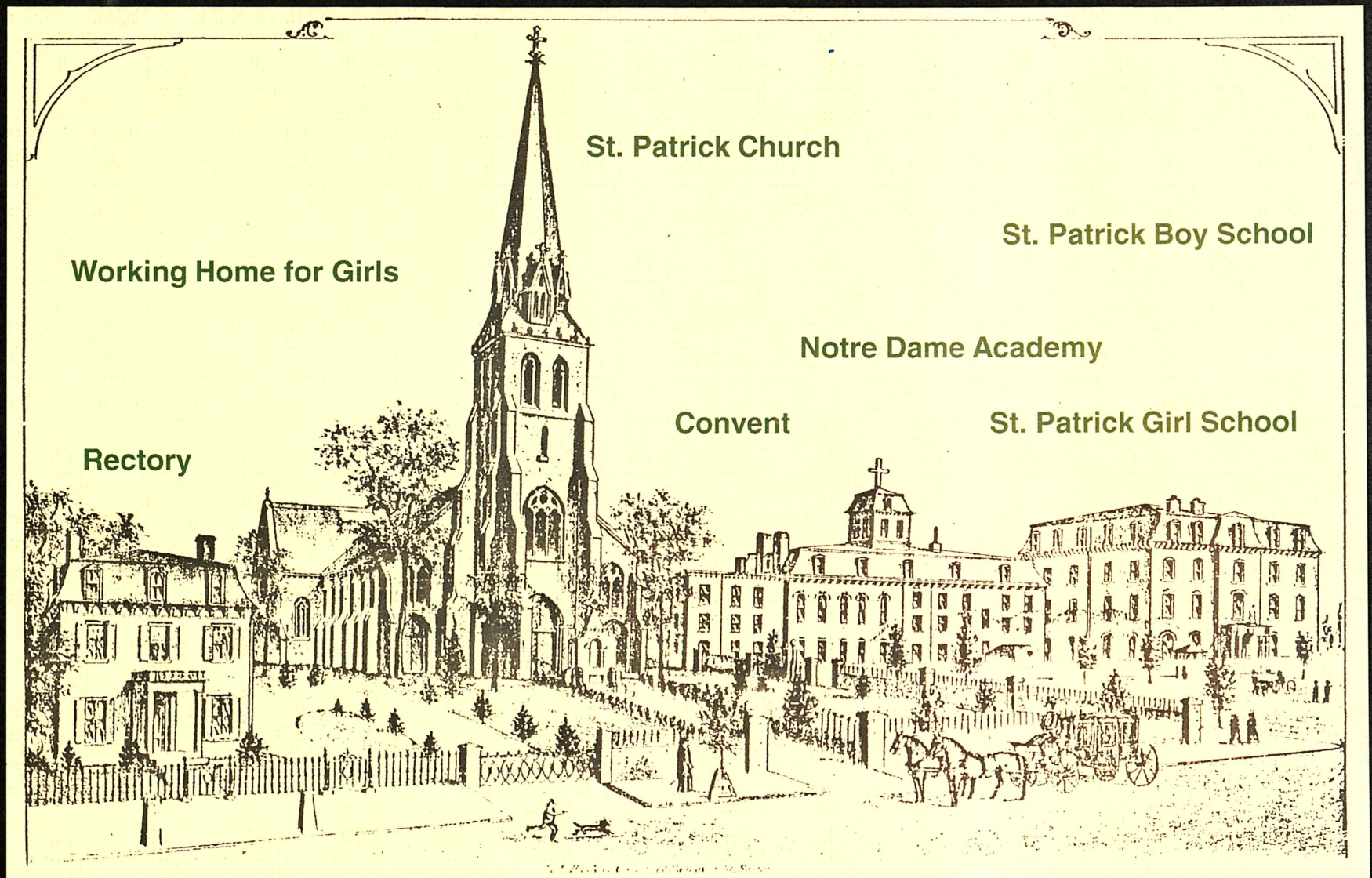
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Sisters of Notre Dame  
brought to Lowell to educate  
immigrant girls.

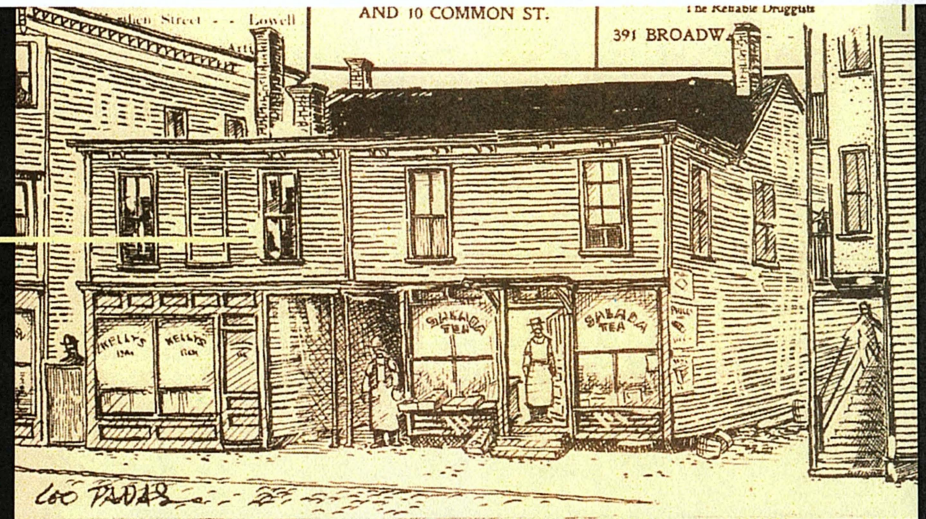


# The O'Brien's \_\_\_\_\_





# Perceptions



Conditions in deed of  
William Hilliard Jr. and Francis Hilliard  
To George Brown  
August 23, 1832

And this conveyance is on the express condition, that the said Brown, shall neither convey or lease, by parol or by deed, said land or any part thereof, or any building or part of any building thereon standing to any Irishman or Irish woman for the space of three months from the date hereof; nor ever after, provided in that time, the owners of land on Fenwick Street shall, by a certain mortgage of land now occupied by Irish men on said street according to the present plan, commence legal operations to expel said Irish men therefrom, and this conveyance is on the further condition, that the said Brown, shall not for three months, nor ever after provided said owners shall proceed as aforesaid in regard to said mortgage, in any way convey, lease or dispose of the aforegranted premises to any person or persons without an express condition, that if any Irish man be suffered to occupy the same, said conveyance, lease or disposition shall be void.

- Deed between Hilliard & Brown, 1832



# Perceptions

**Accident.**—There seemed some probability yesterday, that the number of tenants in the Irish house on Gorham st. would have been lessened by one, as it appeared that one of the children was in the street drain. A terrible pother was raised, as may well be imagined, where twenty Irish women were howling for the "darlint." He was fished out in the way which Putman dragged the wolf from the den—a stout Paddy crawled in, and was dragged out by the heels with the child in his clutches. Life was restored by rolling.

—The Lowell Juvenile Artil-



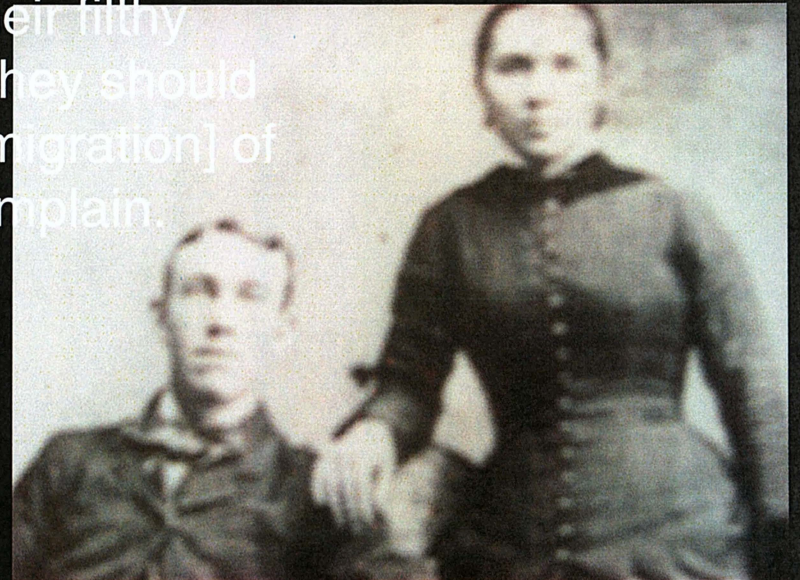
*Weekly Compendium, September 6, 1832*



# Perceptions \_\_\_\_\_

When we see respectable and wealthy American families driven out from tenements that they had erected for their own use, and convenience, rather than endure the nuisances created by their Irish neighbors; when we see whole streets deserted by their former inhabitants and filled with a low class of foreigners before whose doors are presented constant and disgusting exhibitions of their filthy habits... we wonder that by word or act they should countenance the policy [unrestricted immigration] of which our American citizens so justly complain.

**Vox Populi, August 15, 1851.**





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# The Smelling Committee

The Sisters hold themselves ready for all emergencies, and listening from hour to hour for the boding tolling [of the bell]. After their hard days laboring the factory girls gathered in the parlor, carrying stones for want of a better weapon. Men came nightly to watch with the Sisters hiding in the cellar. ... Just at dusk one quiet evening the ominous peal sounded forth from the belfry. Yes the Know-Nothings were approaching the church, but they had not counted sufficiently on the Irish loyalty and vim. When just within sight of St. Patrick's they were attacked by some strong armed Irish men and women, - Yes women for these led the attack. The march became a melee, and the street became completely filled with the motley crowd.

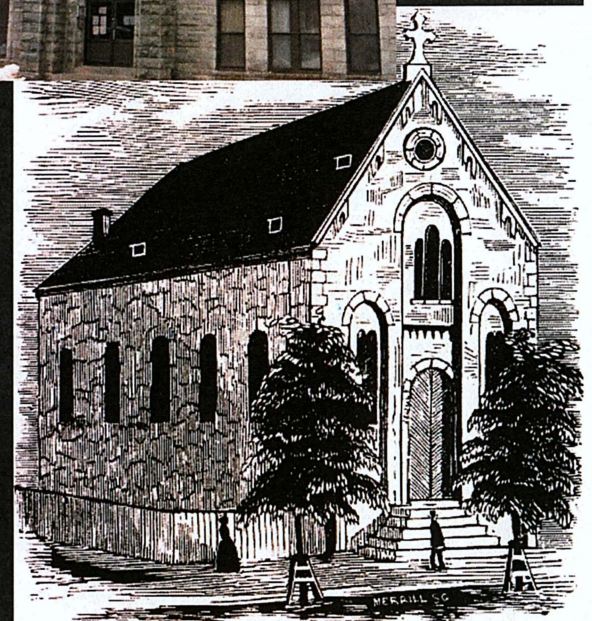
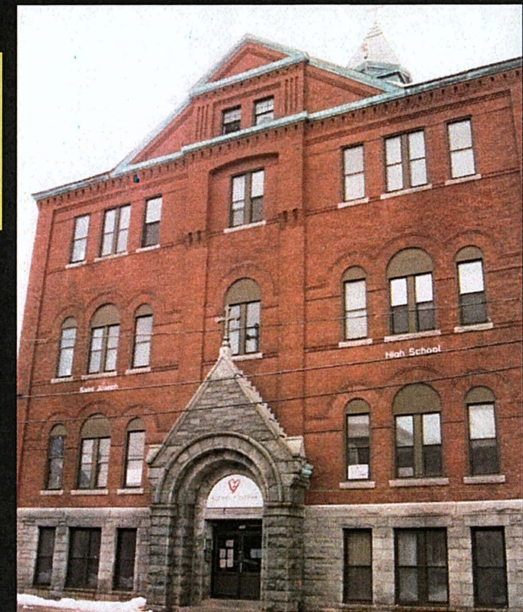
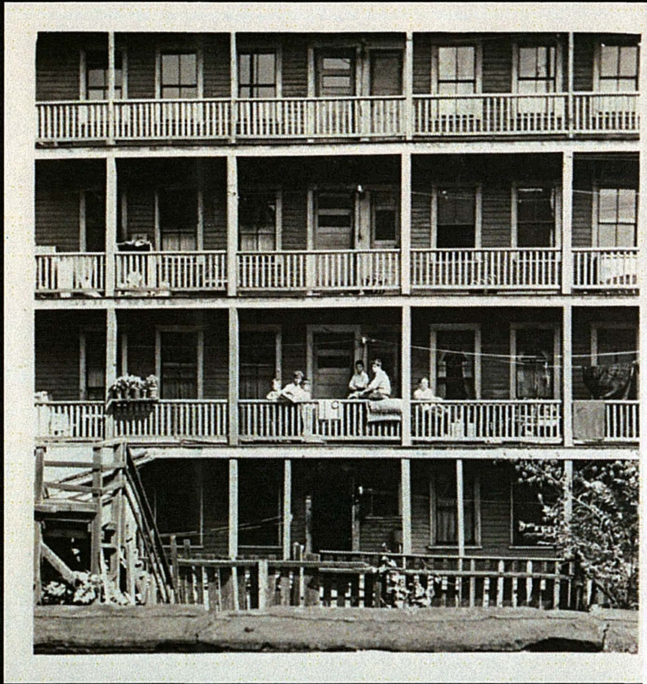
**A Sister of Notre Dame who witnessed  
a Know-Nothing attack  
on the convent, 1854**





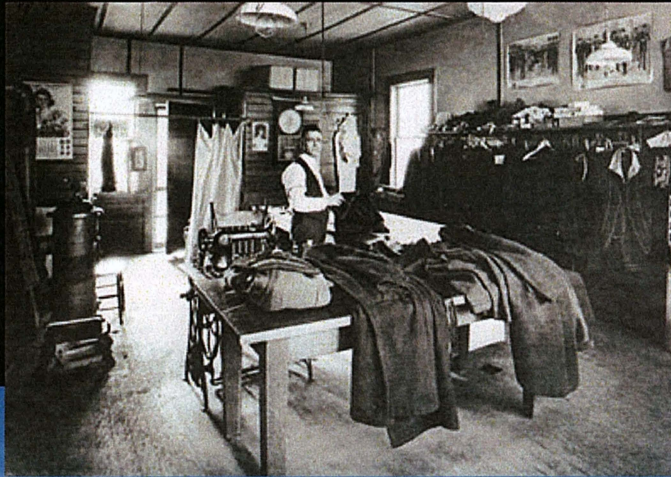
# French-Canadians

*L'Etoile*





# Greek Community \_\_\_\_\_





# North Common Village



1939 - The destruction of homes permanently changed the Acre community.



# The Acre Today \_\_\_\_\_





# The Acre

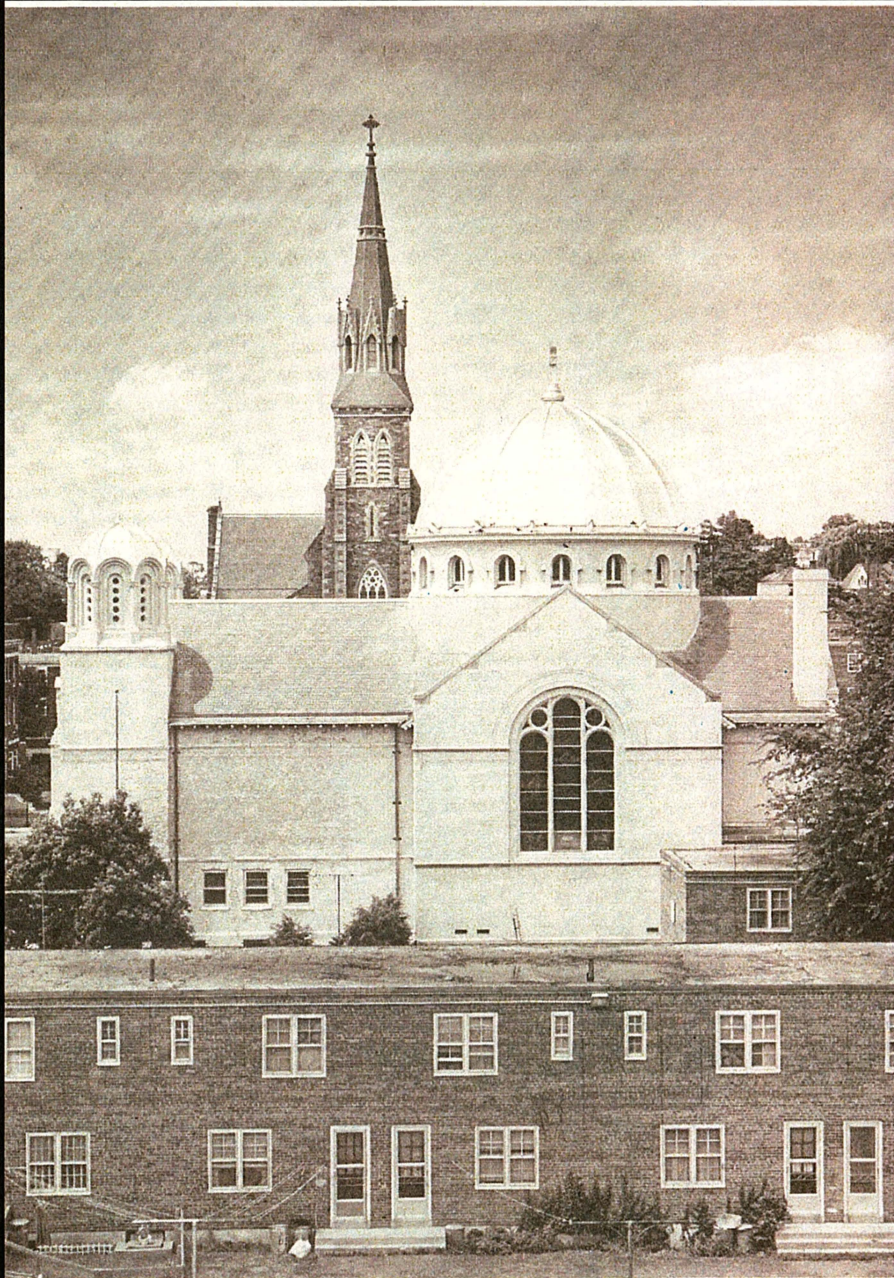


Photo by Jim Higgins